TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE USPS

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1. KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION.

    a. Mission, function, or type of business.
    b. Average daily volume of mail received and mailed by **type;** such as letter-size, flats, parcels, overnight, registered, insured, certified.
        Annual postage & fees paid to USPS.
    c. Empty equipment requirements.
    e. Correct address.
    f. Make sure USPS is always aware of what you do for them:
        (1) Make mail collection runs (from how many stops).
        (2) Reduce work by consolidating mail shipments (number of pieces before and after consolidation).
        (3) Produce automation compatible mail.
        (4) Deliver incoming mail to addressee.
        (5) Forward undeliverable as addressed mail.

2. UNDERSTAND USPS.

    a. Functional responsibilities:

        (1) Plant manager
            (a) Responsible for:
                1. Processing mail.
                2. Sorting mail.
                3. Transporting mail between processing plants.
            (b) Has limited budget.
            (c) Carries out policy; does not make policy.
            (d) Normally works for Area Vice President.

        (2) Postmaster
            (a) Responsible for:
                1. Retail operations.
                2. Mail delivery.
                3. Final, manual mail sorting in delivery units at post offices, branches, and stations.
            (b) Has limited budget. Under pressure to reduce costs and increase revenues.
            (c) Carries out policy; does not make policy.
            (d) Works for District Manager.

        (3) District Address Information System Office
            (a) Responsible for:
                1. Assignment of ZIP + 4 Codes.
                2. Entering addresses and changes to addresses in the Address Management System database.
            (b) Carries out policy; does not make policy.

            (c) Works for the National Customer Support Center but works closely with the District Manager.

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       (4)   Business Mail Entry Unit accepts permit mail and postage discount mailings.

       (5)   Postal Business Center
          (a) Provides:
            1. Problem resolution.
            2. Information.
            3. Training.
          (b) Carries out policy; does not make policy.
          (c) Normally works for the District Manager.

       (6)   District Manager
          (a) Has some flexibility in allocating budget and work-hours.
          (b) Carries out policies in Domestic Mail Manual and Postal Operations Manual but does not make policy.
          (c) Normally works for the Area Vice President.

       (7)   Area Vice President
          (a) Has a great deal of autonomy.
          (b) Works for the Chief Operating Officer.

  b.   Know USPS policies and procedures (All available on **paper;** some on CD & USPS Home Page - WWW.USPS.GOV):

      (1)   Domestic and International Mail Manuals.
      (2)   USPS Postal Operations Manual.
      (3)   USPS Publication 28, Postal Addressing Standards.
      (4) USPS Publication 25, Designing Letter Mail.
      (5)   USPS Publication 63, Designing Flat Mail.
      (6) USPS Publication 2, Packaging for Mailing.
      (7)   USPS Postal Bulletins (biweekly).

  c.   USPS operates 100 percent on non-appropriated funds. USPS must have revenue to offset costs.

  d.   Understand USPS' budget cycles. Their budget call for the next fiscal year is in March.

3.   CULTIVATE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE.

  a.   Introduce yourself at Postal Customer Council meetings and National Postal Forums.
  b.   Make courtesy call on new people.
      (1)   Briefly introduce yourself and your organization.
      (2)   Tell them you look forward to working with them.
      (3)   Invite them to your facility.
      (4)   Send thank you letter.
  c.   Don't let them forget you!

4. SPECIFIC ISSUES.

    a. Know what you want.
        (1) List your desires in bullet or outline format.
        (2) List constraints such as space limitations.
        (3) List USPS policies affecting the issue.
        (4) Ask for exception or policy change when necessary.
        (5) Let USPS determine how to accomplish what you want.
        (6) Translate your activity's language into plain English or Postal Service language.

    b. Discuss what you want with the responsible person.
        (1) Minor or, very urgent issues - telephone.
        (2) Major issues - in person.
        (3) Determine who (you and USPS) will do what.
        (4) Establish time frames for accomplishments.
        (5) Set date & time for additional meetings if needed.
        (6) Document things agreed to.
        (7) After discussion send letter:
            (a) Thank USPS for the meeting.
            (b) State your understanding of whom will do what and when.
        (8) Check to ensure agreed to things are fulfilled.
        (9) Send thanks when agreed to things are fulfilled.
        (10) Discuss unfulfilled agreed to things with responsible person.
        (11) Polite persistence pays off.
        (12) Be prepared to negotiate:
            (a) Know established (in writing) USPS policies on subject of negotiation.
            (b) USPS is revenue and profit driven.
            (c) Sometimes USPS wants to withdraw or reduce a service they provide or refuses to provide some service because of cost. Find a solution together.
            (d) DO NOT GIVE-IN EASILY.

5. POLICY AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES.

    a. Forward through command channels all:
        (1) Policy issues
        (2) Operational issues not resolved by Plant Managers, District Managers, Address Information Service Managers, or Postal Business Centers.
    b. Provide detailed summary regarding previous efforts to resolve the issue. Include:
        (1) Name, job title, address, and telephone number (commercial and DSN) for each person in each discussion and date of discussions.
        (2) USPS' and your organization's position on issue.
        (3) Copies of correspondence on the issue.

        Prepared by DoD Official Mail Manager.